

Letters to the Editor

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Where would Combat Arms be without lowly support MOSes?

Again, the God Almighty Combat Arms speaks. Where exactly would SGT Thompson (*Letter to Editor, Spring 96*) be without the lowly support MOSes? I'll tell you—not paid, not fed and not equipped for the mission.

I realize not all combat arms soldiers maintain this superiority complex, but I've seen enough evidence to be incensed at this moronic attitude.

My husband works in a S-1 shop in an armor brigade with the general consensus being they're rear echelon wimps. No one notices that the shop lights are on at 7:00 or 8:00 p.m. until they personally have a problem. Then it's whining and complaining over something a platoon sergeant has neglected or even the soldier himself. Then, they need S-1 to fix everything.

At the same time, combat arms MOSes don't have the time for college. Neither does my husband. So when you only need 500 or 550 points for promotion, my husband's MOS stands above 700 constantly. But, I see you think that's fair.

As far as "setting the standard," my husband takes great pride in his job and is highly professional in both attitude and appearance.

So as far as joining the gang in combat arms, we've been there, done that and will continue to do so. Jump off that high horse and learn to respect people for the

job they do and don't demean someone just because they don't carry a combat arms MOS.

Penny S. Forsythe
Ft. Lewis, WA

No matter your MOS or rank, we're all in the same Army

I have three comments in regard to two letters in your Spring 96 edition.

First, SFC LaHaine has a valid point, but I feel he may not reach many NCOs. Primarily, because most of the NCOs who've been voicing their concerns are sergeants and promotable specialists. He obviously has made it to the senior level, so naturally his opinion may not carry much weight.

Second, SGT Thompson is certainly proud of his CME. However, I do know personnel of various ranks, in the same CME, who don't share his promotion theory. It's simply not plausible to just switch MOSes because of the cutoff scores. MOSes are being merged frequently. (I'm in an MOS that was combined.)

Third, it shouldn't matter what your MOS or rank is. We're all in the same Army. As a result, that makes us all responsible for taking care of each other. NCOs just have a greater responsibility.

As an NCO, I live by two simple phrases.

My two basic responsibilities are: the accomplishment of my mission and the

welfare of my soldiers and set the example. By working hard on and off duty I got promoted in a tough MOS. For the specialists and sergeants trying to get promoted—don't give up, just work harder. Life will never be completely fair. What makes it easy is *knowing how to adapt and overcome.*

SSG Rosetta Parker (31F FTUS)
Yauco, Puerto Rico

Battle Staff MTT makes passing course easier

Last year I had the pleasure of attending the first Mobile Training Team (MTT) course given by the Battle Staff Course, U.S. Army Sergeants Major Academy, Ft. Bliss, TX.

I Corps CSM Roberts requested the Battle Staff Course (BSC) send instructors to help prepare us for attendance at the BSC.

The school sent MSG Alexander and MSG Diaz to Ft. Lewis to teach the two-week MTT course. We were taught only the testable subjects in the fast-paced course, with heavy emphasis on graphics.

We took the MTT course very seriously because we had read about the BSC in *The NCO Journal* and had heard horror stories about the failure rate being very high.

This year I attended the regular Battle Staff Course. I'm sure the MTT course made the difference for me because I don't think I could have passed without the practice. I believe that some, if not most, of the NCOs who fail this course could have passed if they could have had the practice I got in the MTT course and if graduates of the BSC had helped prepare others in their unit beforehand.

I hope all my fellow Battle Staff graduates will go back to their units and help their peers get ready for this course. The BSC should try to send out more Mobile Training Teams, as well. The key to passing the BSC is preparation, preparation, preparation.

SSG William G. Hansel
HHC, 5th Bn, 20th Inf, Ft. Lewis, WA

AG Corps NCOs responsible for correct term usage

I understand the difficulties and long hours MSG Musgrove dealt with in a maneuver unit Bn S-1 (*"Combat PAC Supervisor," Spring 96*). I was a former assistant personnel sergeant in the 6th Inf Div (Light), personnel sergeant in the 325th Airborne Inf Reg, 82nd Airborne Div, Ft. Bragg, NC, and a graduate of the Battle Staff NCO Course.

I agree that TC 12-16, *PAC Noncommissioned Officer's Guide*, dated June 1991, does provide some useful information for a personnel sergeant. However, AR 600-8-103, *Battalion S-1*, dated September 1991, officially renamed the following terms:

- Personnel and Administration Center (PAC) to Battalion S-1
- PAC supervisor to personnel sergeant
- Personnel Staff Noncommissioned Officer (PSNCO) to assistant personnel sergeant

I still have NCOs and officers ask me what a "personnel sergeant" is. When I explain, they reply, "Oh, a PAC supervisor." As Adjutant General Corps NCOs, it is our responsibility to keep up with the newest terminology and ensure the battalion-level TDAs and TOEs are published with the correct terms.

SFC G. B. Patrick

Senior personnel supervisor, Office of the Chief of Staff, Army, the Pentagon, Washington, DC

The NCO Journal benefits Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion

I'm writing on behalf of the Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion (BALTBAT) as a follow up to our recent telephone conversation.

Since these countries are just starting to rebuild, I personally feel that your magazine will help benefit the program. With all of the training teams that go through the Baltics, from many different countries, when I talk to some of them one of the recurring themes of a problem that is hard to tackle is their lack of the NCO concept and the amount of trust and responsibility we place in ours.

The *NCO Journal* would not only be available to the BALTBAT personnel to promote professionalism and practice reading English, but would also be available to the instructors from the other countries, themselves professional soldiers.

The possibilities for multinational jointness at the NCO level are immeasurable. The magazines will be distributed among the countries of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and I guarantee you the magazines will be dog-eared in no time.

CDR Jeffrey S. Beeby, USN
U.S. Office of Defense Cooperation, Denmark

Quotation from GEN Reimer article applies to Army Reserves

Your Spring 96 issue (*CSA counts on NCOs to keep the spirit alive*) contains a quotation from Aubrey Newman's book (*"Follow Me: The Human Element of Leadership"*) titled "Remember Me." That piece really hits the Army Reserves.

The Reserves meet once a month and two weeks out of the year. The "chitchat" is about trying to put together what happened last drill, what's happening this month's drill and what's supposed to happen next drill.

The Reserves consist of civilians and Active Guard and Reserve (AGR) soldiers who maintain the unit during the month. The number of "full timers" who are assigned to that unit depends on the size of the unit.

The unit I'm assigned to has 45 Reserve positions, three AGR positions for maintenance and one civilian position. We also support another unit that adds 30 Reserve positions.

I'm a Reservist and a unit administrator for both Reserve units. It's the "full-timers" and dedicated commanders and first sergeants and Reservists who keep the units going. The Reserves work like a revolving door and it's due to poor sponsorship that makes the statement "Remember Me" so applicable to the Reserves.

As NCOs and leaders we should know our soldiers and make it a point to

talk to each one of them during the drill weekend. So many times the best soldiers leave the Reserves because they aren't challenged. They go untrained in their MOS, don't get promoted, sit around waiting for someone to make a decision. We NCOs must ensure that our soldiers aren't relating to the person in "Remember Me."

Remember them before it's too late. I've added your story to my sponsorship letter, my newsletter and my bulletin board. Maybe the right NCOs will read it.

SSG Cathi Cronin
659th Det 1, Yakima, WA

Why aren't sergeants (E-5s) being taken for drill sergeants?

I have six years in service and am in excellent physical and mental condition. At this point in my career I'm trying all kinds of things to set me ahead of my peers and I feel I've gone as lateral as I can at the unit level.

I read in your Spring 96 edition about AC shortages in the training arena and thought this would finally be my shot at becoming a drill sergeant. I was told by a representative from the Drill Sergeant Branch that they were "no longer taking E-5s."

I feel this isn't right and that shortages should be filled by any NCO E-5 and above.

In recent times I've known of two E-5 females who were selected and got pregnant because they didn't want to go. Surely, if those were open to any qualified sergeant that wouldn't have happened.

As an E-5, I'm a leader too and should be given every opportunity to enhance my career as well.

SGT Keith D. Baskerville
Ft. Clayton, Panama

Sergeant proposes "truly fair" promotion system

Our promotion system is laced with injustice and lack of equal opportunity because of the old buddy-buddy system.

If you don't have "face time," your opportunity for further promotion is slim.

"You have to take the hard jobs," they say. I've seen more than enough fine NCOs who've done just that only to be passed over for promotion again and again. They took the hard jobs, they have clean records and high awards. Yet, they still wait year after year for someone on the board to recognize their potential.

If you really want a truly fair and equal opportunity promotion system for senior NCOs, here it is:

☐ All of the records the board reviews must be void of name, race, gender, SSN, religious preference, photo and the dates the soldier was stationed at each unit.

☐ What board members will have to review after all this is omitted are the hard-core facts of performance. Those whose job performance stands out above the others should be promoted before their peers.

☐ Promotions shouldn't be determined by board members who base their decision on whether they like the individual or not—whether the soldier is black, white, yellow or brown; whether they're male or female in some MOSes; whether or not they belong to special clubs.

Regardless of what the skeptics say, this proposed system would work. It would be fair and equal for all soldiers. To all those soldiers who believe and know that the promotion system needs improvement—continue to speak out.

*SFC Delbert Roger III
Ft. Knox, KY*

Reserve unit assignment the "greatest challenge...faced"

I'm an Active-duty soldier assigned to a Reserve unit and it's by far the greatest challenge I've ever faced in my 15 years of service, which includes time as a drill sergeant, instructor, platoon sergeant and first sergeant.

I'm in a Reserve unit in Chattanooga, TN. I've been told I shouldn't come in here trying to make changes, that Reserve units do things differently. Yet, I've seen so many violations of FM 20-21

and AR600-9 that it's made me wonder why I was sent here. Not that a lot of good things aren't happening within the Reserve Command. I will remain loyal to my unit just as I was to my Active unit.

However, there is little or no support and my rater, senior rater and reviewer are all part of this system. I must drive 100 miles to the nearest military installation for any service. I made three trips just to get a DA photo taken and I got no travel or any other allowance. There's no gym, post exchange or commissary.

I'm not complaining — merely making things known to my Army family. I may not win the war, but there are little battles I will attempt to win. And, I will never lower my standards for the sake of anyone, no matter the cost.

*SFC Jackie A. Horton
Training/Operation NCOIC,
Chattanooga, TN*

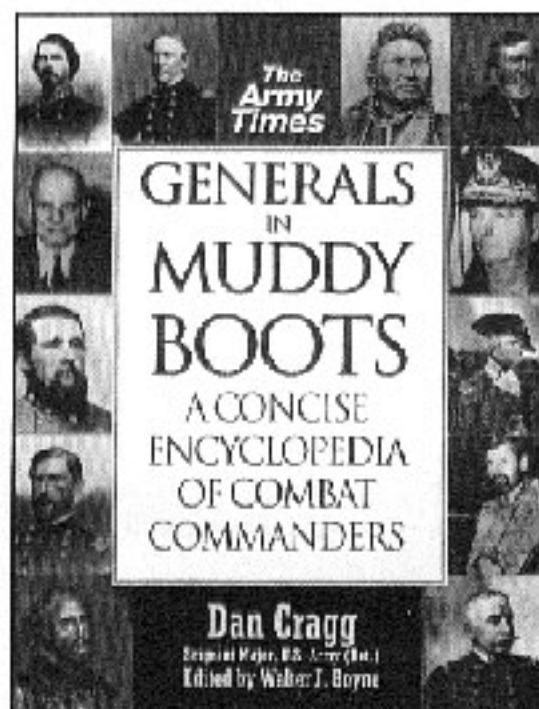
Both PT and marksmanship should count toward promotion

The comments (*Spring 96 Letters to the Editor*) of SGT Davis (what shooting Expert on the rifle range had to do with an E-7 leading troops) and SGT Thompson's remarks (that quality NCOs exceed standards, including PT), prompted me to write. They said for anything to mean a damn, it has to count for promotion.

Our battalion this year devoted three drills to marksmanship qualification instead of the usual one. Since the direct fire of a rifle gets to its target a hundred times faster than the indirect fire of the artillery, the further that rifle fire can reach, the better; and for any emphasis on it to count...the E-7 shooting Expert is also going to have to count.

*SGT Roger K. Fike
CAARNG, San Miguel, CA*

Book Reviews



Author Dan Cragg is a retired sergeant major who served 22 years in the U.S. Army, 5-1/2 years in Vietnam.

A book is first a social act, a product for the public, only secondly is it a personal statement. Generally, you will search in vain for the perspective of the senior enlisted man himself on the role and acts of the architects of strategy;

seldom do the *doers* become the *appraisers*.

The author examines commanders who fought alongside their troops, from farthest antiquity through the conflict in Vietnam. The 300-plus selected leaders are culled from both famous and lesser-known figures. All demonstrated outstanding leadership qualities, cared for the lives in their charge, displayed bravery under fire, had good luck, were plain-spoken and knew something about how to win a fight.

This 196-page reference will be a boon to the busy student of military history. Cragg's sensitivity to a commander's concern for his troops—making sure they aren't committed to battle without having obtained every possible advantage for them—permeates the book and will appeal to both the young and members of the "brown shoe" generation.

This book, reviewed by J. Michael Brower, an analyst with the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army, sells for \$29.95 and was published this year by The Army Times Publishing Company, New York.